

An Overview of Honors Program Deliberations

A proposal for an Interdisciplinary Honors Program was forwarded to UG Council on January 25, 2010. After that submission, a presentation about Honors at a Directors of Undergraduate Studies meeting on March 5, 2010 elicited comments from some that the proposal lacked flexibility, as it was a 21-hour program that was designed to satisfy 24 hours of UK Core. Objections included the fact that many Honors students bring appreciable hours of credit from AP, IB, and CLEP (or college work prior to UK) and likely would not need all of the general education credits, and that the program still was not likely to be attractive to faculty from all colleges.

Undergraduate Council discussed the proposal with Dr. Ettensohn present, including limitations of the proposal as described above. On March 30, 2010, UG Council tabled the proposal pending more work on the proposal, including more clarity on its relationship to general education.

An Honors discussion was scheduled with the Colleges on May 6, 2010. Most of the academic associate deans from the undergraduate colleges, along with the Directors of Honors (Ettensohn), the Gaines Center (Rabel) and the Chellgren Center (Kraemer), met to discuss the Honors program. Dr. Ettensohn outlined the history of the Honors Program, complete with a discussion of the problems with finding faculty to teach since the development of the Track system and the move of faculty back into their colleges from Honors in 2004. There was little agreement among the Associate Deans with the Interdisciplinary model of Honors that replicated the coming UK Core; most felt that it would be inflexible and not attractive for their colleges to participate in. Most came down on the side of a program that would allow their students to participate while possibly taking some of the course work in their disciplines, and also felt that a more flexible program would attract faculty to teach in Honors. They wanted a program that was truly University wide, not just the province of a small group of faculty who had traditionally been associated with Honors.

As a follow-up to this meeting, Provost Subbaswamy and Associate Provost Mullen appointed an Honors Program Review Committee with the following members:

John Balk (Engineering)
Lisa Broome Price (Honors and Gaines Programs Staff)
Jonathan Glixon (Fine Arts and Honors Faculty)
Jason Grant (current Honors student member)
Phil Harling (Arts and Sciences, Chair)
Jim Hertog (Communications and Information Studies)
Michael Kilgore (Medicine)
Sung Hee Kim (Arts and Sciences)
Leigh Maynard (Agriculture)
Margaret Mohr-Schroeder (Education)
Ganpathy Murthy (Arts and Sciences)
Darlene Welsh (Nursing)
Meg Marquis (Honors Program Staff)

They were charged on August 24th, 2010 to “evaluate the proposed [Honors Interdisciplinary Studies] Program” (currently tabled by the Undergraduate Council), “to consider models from our benchmarks and other similar institutions, and develop and recommend a program that will serve the needs of the University of Kentucky’s students and faculty.” They had access to benchmarking of other programs, met with current students, and alumna, Provost Subbaswamy and Associate Provost Mullen, Dr. Ettensohn, the Honors Director, Dean Kornbluh, and interviewed the Dean of the Honors College at Michigan State.

A summary of Recommendations from Honors Program Review Committee follows:

1. The Honors Program should not be closely tied to General Education requirements.
2. We endorse a hybrid Honors Program – one that retains a common core instructional experience while providing greater flexibility via a significant à la carte component.
3. The core-course component of a hybrid Honors Program needs to be conceived broadly enough to attract tenured and tenure-eligible instructors from across the university on a regular basis.
4. The Honors Program’s core instructional experience should be composed of two required courses rather than the current four required courses or the proposed five required courses.
5. The Honors Program should include a substantial à la carte dimension, in which students choose from among Honors courses housed within departments, designated Honors sections of established courses, and/or Honors options in regular courses.
6. Honors students should be granted much flexibility in meeting the requirements of their Honors experience beyond the core instructional requirements, however, a cadre of dedicated Honors advisors should guide them.
7. A larger Honors cohort should be afforded enhanced opportunities for participation in faculty led research, service, internships, and education abroad. A strong Honors co-curriculum should be developed, building on the ties already established with the Undergraduate Research Program and the Office of International Affairs.
8. Honors students should be afforded numerous opportunities to engage in meaningful service to the Commonwealth (and beyond).
9. Over time, the Honors Program should grow to serve a significantly higher proportion of UK’s entering class.
10. As a new à la carte component will make the Honors program more dispersed than it is currently, considerable efforts must be made to facilitate a sense of community among Honors students across disciplines.
11. The Provost and Associate Provost will need to work closely with deans to ensure continuous staffing of Honors courses and sections by tenured/tenure-eligible faculty.
12. Faculty members participating in Honors should do so on 2-4-year “contracts,” to ensure staffing continuity and thus to ensure the benefits that Honors students currently enjoy from staffing continuity.
13. There should be clear articulation between Honors Program requirements and requirements for Honors within the Major.

The work of this committee, combined with renewed conversations with the previous honors committee, academic associate deans, honors students and deans, have led to the current program proposal, which was approved on August 30, 2011 by UG Council. We are waiting on approval of new Honors courses by iGEOC for UK Core. Once that process is done, the program proposal and all new courses will be forwarded to Senate Council, as is done for all program and course change proposals.

Some important characteristics of the current program that illustrate the need for change.

There is evidence that we need to consider a different model. Colleges are unwilling to provide adequate numbers of tenure line faculty to teach in honors, and if we want to have a program that belongs to all colleges and all faculty, then we must change the program to allow more participation by all colleges to the extent that they wish to.

Students in the UK Honors Program come from all colleges, with Arts and Sciences accounting for over 43% of Honors students (Table 1). Of the Arts and Sciences students, the majority are in Biology with over 25% of the total A&S students. Engineering, Agriculture and Business and Economics are the next three largest college contributors, although Undergraduate Studies students have been the second largest entering cohort over the past four years.

Table 1. Honors students by College, 2007-2010.

College	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total	%
Agriculture	16	22	9	17	64	6.3%
Arts & Sciences	131	115	102	96	444	43.5%
Business & Econ	21	17	13	17	68	6.7%
Communications	7	4	8	8	27	2.6%
Design	6	7	2	4	19	1.9%
Education	2	4	4	3	13	1.3%
Engineering	43	37	35	48	163	16.0%
Fine Arts	11	5	3	3	22	2.2%
Health Sciences	4	8	2	1	15	1.5%
Nursing	3	6	2	5	16	1.6%
Social Work	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
UG Studies	63	41	29	36	169	16.6%
Totals	307	266	209	238	1020	100.0%

Two themes that have been recurring during the past two years of discussions are 1) that we need to have an Honors Program that is flexible and allows students to take courses in the discipline, which will also benefit colleges (college and departmental honors opportunities) and majors in recruitment, and 2) that faculty from all colleges will find it attractive to teach Honors courses.

Since the move to the Honors tracks in 2005, the courses available to students have been restrictive (wrt discipline), with 9 to 12 hours of the 15 being part of either the Western Culture track or World Food Issues track, and it is clear that our program does not currently attract faculty from all colleges to participate. Table 2 shows the origin of teaching resources for sections of honors courses offered during the 2009-10 and 2010-11 academic years. For the past few years, the number of active, tenured or tenure-track faculty teaching honors has been approximately half of the total Honors teaching faculty.

Table 2. Honors teaching by college or unit for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 academic years, including those scheduled for spring 2012.

Responsible Unit	# Sections	% of Total	% Students in Honors
Agriculture	10	8.7%	6%
Arts & Sciences	33	28.7%	44%
Communications	1	0.9%	2.6%
Education	1	0.9%	1.3%
Engineering	2	1.7%	16.0%
Fine Arts	5	4.3%	2.2%
Graduate School	2	1.7%	
Honors Program Staff	2	1.7%	
Emeriti/Adjunct	59	51.3%	
Totals	115	100%	

When translated into sections taught, it is clear that part-time instructors, emeritus faculty, and university staff (with doctorates) have been responsible for nearly 55% of the course sections offered. This is not representative of the distribution of students across the colleges, for example, 44% of Honors students are from Arts and Sciences but only about 29% of the sections in the program were offered by A&S during this period (and 9 sections were offered by lecturers from A&S). Agriculture provides relatively more teaching in honors due to the success of the World Food Issues track.

Overview of the proposal:

The current proposal does the following;

- First year students will take two Honors Courses with UK Core Inquiry credit for 6 credits.
- Honors students will take only a 1-semester C&C course, e.g., WRD 110H or a course to be constructed (e.g., WRD 115H), which emphasizes research for writing and basics of oral communication and digital media.
- During the 2nd and 3rd years students will take at least two more Honors courses, for 6 credits, chosen from HON seminars, H-sections of existing courses, Honors options (contract with a faculty member in a non-honors course), or strategic use of graduate courses in consultation with Honors and Major advisors.
- Students will complete at least two Honors Experiences: Honors Research, International Study, Community Engagement/Service Learning, or other approved activity for at least 6 credits.
- Student must complete the Senior Capstone project for at least 3 credits.
- Honors students can take any Honors class without prerequisites.
- Honors students can take graduate level (5xx) courses for Honors credit and to provide flexibility in their major.

This provides for an Honors education of 21 credits, including at least 6 credits of experiential learning. Students may be able to complete UK Core requirements in Honors courses, but this is not a requirement. They may complete UK Core much as any other student by taking honors or non-honors UK Core courses, or by bringing credit for prior learning to UK with them (AP, CLEP, IB, prior college coursework) as is the case for all students.

Honors Program Change Timeline

Date	Activity
Jan. 25, 2010	Submission of Interdisciplinary Honors Program proposal which was a mirror of UK Core requirements, satisfying 24 hours of core.
March 5, 2010	DUS meeting at which the proposal was presented. Discussions afterward indicated dissatisfaction from some.
March 30, 2010	Dr. Ettensohn met with UG Council and discussed the proposal. After he left, the Council discussed the proposal and tabled it pending more clarity on its relationship to general education and flexibility of the program.
May 6, 2010 and May 11, 2010	A meeting of undergraduate college academic associate deans and the Directors of Honors, Gaines and Chellgren met on May 6 to discuss the proposal and options for the future. A regular meeting of the Associate Deans group occurred on May 11, 2010. There was little support for the program as proposed, and it was indicated that a flexible program that works in the majors and was attractive to faculty from all colleges was needed.
August 24, 2010	Honors Program Review Committee appointed by Provost Subbaswamy and AP Mullen. They were charged with evaluating the proposal submitted by honors and investigating possible alternatives.
November 9, 2010	Review committee submitted its report.
Spring 2011	Discussions with current honors faculty, honors students, associate deans, deans to ensure that all will participate.
July 13, 2011	Undergraduate Council discusses the proposal.
August 30, 2011	Undergraduate Council approves program proposal. New courses still in evaluation.
November 2011	New HON Courses in review for UK Core by GEOC. Will be transmitted to UGC and SC as soon as possible.

The Honors Academy
at the
University of Kentucky

Inquiry In Action:
Exploring, Expressing, and Interacting

The Honors Academy at the University of Kentucky

Inquiry in Action: Exploring, Expressing, and Interacting

The Honors Program at UK has a long and proud history, dating back to 1961, and we have already celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Honors at UK this past September. Thousands of students have passed through our program, exploring themselves and the boundaries of thought with outstanding faculty. Concurrent with this celebration, we are now envisioning the next great steps of our distinguished program, embracing all that a vibrant research university can offer to students looking for the best education available anywhere.

As the flagship, land-grant, research university in the Commonwealth, the University of Kentucky offers students access to the expanse of research and creative scholarship from across all of our colleges. And, we provide this access in an environment reminiscent of a small college – a community of scholars.

Our University Honors Program will be transformed into an Honors Academy that will serve all undergraduate colleges and students with centralized programming to attract, retain, and graduate the best and brightest students who come to UK. The Academy will focus on what UK can offer better than perhaps any other university in the Commonwealth: access to a rich diversity of academic offerings, cutting-edge research and scholarship, exciting education-abroad opportunities as well as community service and engagement. The Academy will be marketed to prospective students on the basis of our research-active faculty and the opportunities to be involved with our faculty in ways that leverage their success upon graduation. In other words, we should answer the question, “Why should I be in UK Honors?” with “An Honors education at UK opens up a world of inquiry, including research, education abroad, and service that will challenge you intellectually, provides access to the most creative minds at UK, and prepares you for advanced study and to make a difference in the world upon graduation.”

The program proposed here builds on our new general education program, the UK Core, but is by no means simply a different route by which to satisfy the UK Core. Students will have the opportunity to satisfy some core requirements through the Honors Academy, but the real emphasis is on exploring options throughout the university, learning with and from our research-active faculty, experiencing a discipline through research or the world through travel and service, and producing knowledge as a partner in the academic enterprise. Faculty from all colleges can participate, teaching honors courses from within the major or discipline or at the university level in Honors seminars. It will ask faculty to work with Honors Students in their scholarly programs and to consider exploring ways to interact with them beyond the classroom.

The University is poised to invest in and promote a new Honors Academy, one that recognizes that opportunities for shared learning should reach into every academic college on campus, providing students with access to the best that a research-extensive university can offer in a small community atmosphere. This investment will also emphasize the opportunities that are realized from strong relationships with other enrichment programs at UK, the Chellgren Fellows Program, Undergraduate Research, Education Abroad, the Gaines Center for the Humanities, and the Office of External Scholarships.

The Proposed University Honors Curriculum

The proposed program includes required coursework in UK Core Inquiry, participation in at least two for-credit Honors Experiences, a Senior Capstone, and a choice of coursework campus-wide to fulfill the educational goals of the Honors Student. The program is illustrated in the figure below. There are Honors Course expectations across the academic career of the student, opportunities for residential experiences in Honors Living Learning Communities, particularly during the first two years, academic flexibility, and enhanced advising and co-curricular activities. The graphic below shows a typical progression as currently proposed, recognizing that students may take more than the minimum required courses, or may be involved in Experiences at various stages of progression.

Overview of Proposed UK Honors Program Curriculum			
Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
2 Honors Courses for at least 6 credit hours in UK Core: Inquiry.	1 Honors Course and 1 Experience for at least 6 credit hours.	1 Honors Course and 1 Experience for at least 6 credits hours.	Honors 395 Senior Capstone for at least 3 credit hours.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Each student will take two Honors Courses in UK Core Inquiry areas (as HON courses or Honors sections of existing UK Core courses), at least two Honors Experience Courses, and the HON 398 Senior Capstone, in addition to 6 other credits in Honors Courses. A total of at least 21 hours is required to graduate from Honors. ◆ Honors Courses include Honors Seminars (HON) or Honors courses, sections or options in the major. ◆ Honors Experiences include Honors Research, Education Abroad, Service Learning or Community Outreach, or other approved activity. At least two Honors Experiences are required. ◆ Honors Students who have not earned advanced placement credit or waiver in writing (via an AP English exam) will also be required to complete an Honors Composition and Communications Course. 			
Honors Living Learning Community →			
← Honors Advising and Mentoring →			
← Co-curricular activities and opportunities →			

Overview of Curriculum

Each Honors Student must complete at least 15 hours in Honors Courses, including at least two Honors Courses in the Intellectual Inquiry (HON 1XX, 2XX or Honors courses/sections in existing UK Core courses) and HON 398 – Senior Honors Capstone (or college/departmental equivalent) in order to graduate with Honors. The two Honors courses in the Intellectual Inquiry area are designed to emphasize the importance of critical reading and writing skills in the inquiry process. The remaining two required courses may be chosen from departmental and disciplinary Honors courses and sections, from any available HON 3XX course (not to include HON 398), or, with approval, a graduate course that meets the needs and interests of the student. Any student who has not earned advanced-placement credit or

a waiver in writing (via an AP English exam) must also complete a one-semester course in composition and communications (e.g., WRD 115H).

Each student is also expected to complete two Honors Experiences in one or more of the following areas: Education Abroad, Service Learning or Community Outreach, or Undergraduate Research Experience (HON 301, 352, 395, or an equivalent Honors Course in the major).

Honors students must maintain a 3.5 GPA to remain in the program. Probationary status will be granted to students falling below this threshold who can reasonably be expected to raise their GPA back to 3.5 prior to graduation. Students who have not removed themselves from probationary status after two semesters will be required to leave the program.

Honors Courses and Sections in the Majors

All colleges will be asked to participate in the Honors Program. Primary efforts by college and departments would be to offer honors course in the discipline. Colleges or Departments may propose Honors courses that are uniquely Honors (i.e., the course would not have non-honors sections, for example CIS 3XXH). Alternatively, Honors Sections of a course may also be proposed, reserving a single section of an existing course for Honors Students only. These courses or sections would be identified using the H suffix (e.g., ANT 311H). Any Honors Student, regardless of major and prerequisites, can take these Honors Courses.

Honors (HON) Courses

Each year, a call for Honors Courses will be issued campus-wide, soliciting courses in the four areas of Inquiry, as well as other areas of interest that faculty may have. Table 1 below shows the HON series courses included in the curriculum. The information below is illustrative of proposed offerings, especially in the 15X, 25X, or 3XX series.

Table 1. Honors Courses to be Offered Annually.

Course	Title	Notes
HON 151	Mirrors Of The Universe: Subtitle	3 Credits - Intellectual Inquiry In The Humanities.
HON 152	The World As Natural And Physical Phenomena: Subtitle	3 Credits - Intellectual Inquiry In The Natural/Physical/ Mathematical Sciences
HON 251	The World As Human Network And Affairs: Subtitle	3 Credits - Intellectual Inquiry In The Social Sciences
HON 252	The World As Imaginative Endeavor: Subtitle	3 Credits - Intellectual Inquiry In Arts And Creativity
HON 301	Honors Proseminar: Subtitle	3 Credits - This course allows any faculty member to propose an Honors proseminar in their area of interest. This course may satisfy a UK Core requirement, depending on proposal. (Course already exists.)
HON 352	Honors Education Abroad: Subtitle	Variable credit for approved Honors Education Abroad Experiences. May be used to satisfy Global Dynamics in UK Core.
HON 395	Honors Research and Creativity	3 Credits for approved UG Research. (Course already exists.)
HON 398	Senior Honors Capstone	3 Credits for approved Capstone Research. Required. Also satisfies Communication Requirement in the Major. (Course already exists.)

HON 399	Honors Service Learning & Community Outreach: Subtitle	3 Credits for approved Honors Service Learning and Community Outreach. May be used to satisfy US Citizenship in UK Core. (Course already exists.)
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Honors Experiences

A unique benefit of being a member of the Honors Academy is the opportunity to be involved in a number of Honors Experiences. Each Honors student will be required to participate in at least two credit-bearing Honors Experiences, including, but not limited to, Undergraduate Research with a faculty mentor, Education Abroad, Service Learning or Community Engagement, or other approved activities. Financial resources will be available to assist Honors students pursuing these experiences.

Honors Options

A student may receive Honors credit from a non-Honors course, if an Honors Option Contract is agreed on by the student and instructor and approved by the Honors Program. The Option Contract will spell out the expectations for additional activities to be pursued jointly by the student and instructor during the course of the semester. Examples could include a student research paper or laboratory research, readings and discussion sessions sponsored by the faculty member, class presentations, and other approved activities. This will give motivated students the opportunity to craft a unique Honors activity with a faculty in an area of interest for which an Honors course may not exist.

Rights and Privileges of Honors Academy Membership

Students who are part of the Honors Academy will have a number of benefits available to them, including:

- Access to small, dynamic honors classes and seminars across the disciplines with great professors exploring interesting topics in depth.
- Individualized degree flexibility. Students may, with Major Advisor and Honors Academy advisor approvals, choose from any course at any level, 100 through graduate (500 level). These courses may be petitioned to satisfy UK Core requirements, outside of the two required inquiry courses. The student may also petition to allow substitution of courses in their major, if the substituted course is closely related, or more advanced than the required course. Graduate courses may be used in place of degree requirements or to satisfy electives.
- Students may take any Honors course with no prerequisite enforcement.
- An academic advisor in the Honors Academy as well as in their major.
- Faculty and Peer mentors.
- Honors Research, Education Abroad, and Service Learning and Community Engagement.
- Scholarly research and creativity.
- Arts & Events Passport (free admission) all four years.
- Priority registration during the first window each semester.